A DECLARATION OF THE Lords and Commons Assembled in PARLIAMENT,

Sent to the generall Assembly of the Church of SCOTLAND.

NOV 20 1944

With their Answer thereunto,

Expressing their care to prevent the effusion of Christian blood; and their affections to *Reformation*.

Ordered by the Lords and Commons, That this be forthwith printed and published.

H. Elsynge, Cler. Parl. D. Com.

ALSO,

A Letter sent by some Brethren of the Ministers of the Church of *England*, to the Generall Assembly of the Church of *SCOTLAND*.

With their Answer thereunto annexed.

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September 1. 1642.

London, Printed for *Richard Best*.

A Declaration of both Houses of Parliament,
sent to the Generall Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*.

THe Lords and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, finding to their great griefe, that the distractions of this Kingdom do daily encrease, and that the wicked counsell and practise of a malignant party amongst us, if God prevent them not, are like to cast this Nation in blood and confusion, testifying to all the world; how earnestly they desire to avoyd a civill war, they have addressed themselves in an humble supplication to His Majesty, for the prevention thereof, a Copy of their petition they have thought fit to send to the National Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*, to the intent that that Church and Kingdome, whereunto they are united by so many, and so neere bands, as well spirituall as civill, may see that the like mind is now in them that formerly appeared to be in that Nation; And that they are as attender of the effusion of Christian blood on the one side, as they are zealous on the other of due Reformation both in Church and state: in which work, while they were labouring, they have been interrupted by the plots and practices of a malignant party of Papists and other ill-affected persons, especially of the corrupt and dissolute Clergy, by the inducement and instigation of Bishops and others, whose avarice and ambition being not able to beare the reformation endeavoured by the Parliament, they have laboured (as we can expect little better fruit from such trees) to kindle a flame, and raise a combustion within the bowels of this Kingdome, which if by our supplication to His Majesty, it may be prevented, and that according to our earnest desire therein, all force and warlike preparations being laid aside, we may return to a peaceable and Parliamentary proceeding; We do not doubt but by the blessing of God upon our endevours, we shall setle matters both in Church and State, to the increase of his Majesties Honour and State, the peace and prosperity of his Kingdome; and especially to the glory of God by the advancement of the true Religion, and such a reformation of the Church as shall be most agreeable to Gods word; out of all which there will most undoubtedly result a just, stable, and firme union betwixt the two Kingdomes of *England* and *Scotland*, which according to our protestation, we shall by all good wayes and means, upon all occasions labour to maintaine and preserve.

An Answer by the General assembly of the Kirk of *Scotland*,
to the Declaration sent by the Parliament of *England*.

THe Generall assembly of the Kirke of *Scotland* having received a Declaration sent unto them by the Commissioners of this Kingdom now at *London* from the honorable Houses of the Parliament of *England*, expressing their care to prevent the effusion of Christian bloud in that Kingdome, and their affections to reformation both

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both in Kirk and State, and having taken the same to such consideration as the importance of so weighty matters, and the high estimation they have of so wise and honorable a meeting as is the Parliament of *England*, did require, have with an universall consent resolved upon this following Answer.

1. That from the recent sense of the goodnesse of God in their own late deliverance, and from their earnest desire of all happinesse to our native King and that Kingdom, they blesse the Lord for preserving them in the midst of so many unhappy divisions & troubles from a bloudy intestine war, which is from God the greatest judgment, and to such a Nation the compend of all calamities. They also give God thanks for their former and present desires of a reformation, especially of Religion, which is the glory and strength of a Kingdom, and bringeth with it all temporall blessings of prosperity and peace.

2. That the hearts of all the Members of this Assembly, and of all the unaffected within this Kingdom are exceedingly grieved and made heavy, that in so long a time against the professions both of King and Parliament, and contrary to the joynt desires and prayers of the godly in both Kingdoms, to whom it is more deare and precious then what is dearest to them in the World, the Reformation of Religion hath moved so slowly, and suffered so great interruption. They consider, that not onely Prelats, formall Professors, prophane and worldly men, and all that are politikly affected, are bad counsellers and workers, and doe abuse their power and bend all their strength and policies against the work of God, but the God of this world also with principalities and powers, the rulers of the darknesse of this world, and spirituall wickednesse in high places, are working with all their force, and fraud in the same oppositions, not without hope of successe, they having prevailed so far from the beginning, that in the times of the best Kings of *Judea* of old, and the most part of the Reformed Kirkes of late, a through and perfect Reformation of Religion, hath beene a work full of difficulties; yet do they conceive that as is ought first of all to be intended, so should it be above all other things, with confidence in God, who is greater then the world, and he who is in the world, most seriously indevoured. And that when the Supream providence giveth opportunity of the accepted time and day of salvation, no other worke can prosper in the hands of his servants, if it be not apprehended, and with all reverence and faithfulnesse improved. The Kirk and Nation when the Lord gave them the calling considered not their own deadnesse, nor staggered not at the promise through unbeliefe, but gave glory to God; And who knoweth (wee speak it in humility and love, and from no other mind then from a desire of the blessing of God upon our King and that Kingdom) but the Lord hath now some controversie with *England*, which will not be removed, till first and before all the world his Name, and the Government of his House be setled according to his own will. When this desire shall come, it shall be to *England*, after so long deferred hopes, a Tree of life, which shall not only yeeld temporall blessings unto themselves, but also shall spread the branches so far, that both this Nation, and other reformed Kirks, shall find the fruits thereof, to their great satisfaction.

3. The Commissioners of this Kingdome, in the late Treaty of peace considering that religion is not only the means of the service of God, and saving of Soules, but it is also the Base and foundation of Kingdomes and States; and the strongest band of

the subjects to their Prince in true loyalty, and to knit the hearts of one to another in true unity and love, they did with preface of all due respect and reverence, far from arrogance or presumption, represent in name of this Kingdom their serious thoughts and earnest desires for unity of religion, that in all his Majesties Dominions there might be one confession of Faith, one directory of worship, one publik Catechisme, and one forme of Kirk-government; this they conceived to be acceptable to God Almighty, who delighteth to see his people walking in truth and unity: To be a speciall meanes for conserving of peace betwixt the Kingdomes, & eating the Kings Majesty and the publike government of much trouble which ariseth from differences of religion, very grievous to Kings and estates, of great contente to the King himself, to his Nobles, his Court, and all his people, when occasioned abroad, without scruple to themselves, or scandall to others, all may resort to the same publike worship as if they were at their own dwellings; of suppressing the names of Heretics, and Sects, Puritans, Conformists, Separatists, Anabaptists, &c. which do rent asunder the bowels both of Kirke and kingdome; of depaire of successe to Papists and recusants to have their profession, which is inconsistent with the true reformed religion and authority of Princes; to set up again, and to draw the heart and hands of Ministers from unpleasant and unprofitable controversies to the preasing of mortification, and to treatises of true piety and practicall Divinity. The Assembly doth now enter upon the labour of the Commissioners, unto which they are encouraged not only by their faithfulnesse in the late treaty, but also by the zeale and example of the generall Assemblies of this Kirk in former times, as may appeare by the Assemblies at *Edinr. Decem.* 25. In the yeare 1566, which ordained a letter to be sent to *England* against the Surplice, Tippet, Corner-cap, and such other Ceremonies as then troubled that Kirk, that they might be removed: By the Assembly at *Edenb. April* 24. 1583. humbly desiring the Kings Majesty to command his Ambassadour then going to *England*, to deale with the Queen that there might be an union and band betwixt them and other Christian Princes and reelmes professing the true religion, for defence and protection of the Word of God and professors thereof against the persecution of Papists and Confederates joynt and unite together by the bloudy league of *Trent*, as also that her Majesty would disburden their brethren of *England* of the yoak of Ceremonies imposed upon them against the liberty of the Word. And by the Assembly at *Edenburgh, march* 5. 1589. ordaining the Presbytery of *Edenburg* to use all good and possible meanes for the reliefe and comfort of the kirk of *England* then heavily troubled for the maintaining the true discipline and government of the kirk, and that the brethren in their private and publike prayers recommend the estate of the afflicted kirk of *England* to God, while now by the mercy of God the conjunction of the two kingdomes is many wayes increased the zeale of the generall assembly towards their happinesse ought to be no lesse. But besides these, this Assembly is much incouraged unto this duty both from the Kings Majesty and his Parliament joyntly in their answer to the proposition made by the late Commissioners of the treaty in these words: *To their desire concerning unity of Religion and uniformity of kirk Government, as a speciall meanes for conserving of peace betwixt the two Kingdomes upon the grounds and reasons contained in the paper of the 10. of March, and given in to the Treaty and Parliament of* England: *It is answered upon the 15. of* June, *that his Majesty with*

with advice of both Houses of Parliament, doth approve of the affection of his Subjects of Scotland, *in their desire of having conformity of Kirk government between the two Nations, and of the Parliament hath already taken into consideration the Reformation of Kirk government, so they will proceed therin in due time as shall best conduce to the glory of God, the peace of the Kirk and of both Kingdomes.* And also severally, for his Majesty knoweth that the custody, and vindication, the conservation, and purgation of religion are a great part of the duty of civill authority and power. His Majesties late practise while he was here in person in resorting frequently to the exercises of publik worship, his royall actions in establishing the worship and government of this Kirk in Parliament, and in giving order for a competent maintenance to the Ministery and Seminaries of the Kirk, and his Majesties gracious letter to the Assembly, (seconded by the speach of his Majesties Commissioner) which containes his religious expression: *Where any thing is amisse we will indeavour a Reformation in a faire and orderly way, and when Reformation is setled, we resolved with that authority wherewith God hath vested us, to maintaine and defend it in peace and liberty against all trouble that can come from without, and against all Heresies, Sects, and Schismes, which may arise from within.* All these doe make us hopefull that His Majesty will not oppose, but advance the worke of reformation; In like manner the Honorable Houses of Parliament, as they have many times before witnessed their zeale, so now also in their Declaration sent to the Assembly, which not only sheweth the constancy of their zeale, but their great griefe that the worke hath been interrupted by a Malignant party of Papists, and evill affected persons, especially of the corrupt and dissolute Clergy by the incitement and instigation of Bishops and others; their hopes according to their earnest desire, when they shall returne to a peaceable and Parliamentary proceeding, by the blessing of God, to settle such a reformation in the Church, as shall be agreeable to Gods Word, and that the result shall not be a most firme and stable union betweene the two Kingdomes of *England* and *Scotland*, &c. The Assembly also is not a little encouraged by a letter sent from many reverend brethren of the Kirk of *England*, expressing their prayers and endeavours against every thing which shall be found prejudiciall to the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ, and the peace of your Soveraigne, Upon these encouragements, and having so patent a doore of hope, the Assembly doth confidently expect that *England* will not bestirre themselves in the best way for a reformation of Religion, and doe most willingly offer their prayers and uttermost endeavours for furthering so great a work wherein Christ is so much concerned in his glory, the King in his honour, the Kirk and kingdom of *England* in their happinesse, and this Kirke and kingdome in the purity and peace of the Gospell.

4. That the Assembly also from so many reall invitations are heartned to renew the proposition made by the forenamed Commissioners of this Kingdome for beginning the worke of reformation at the uniformity of Kirk government: for what hope can there be of unity in religion, of one confession of Faith, of one forme of worship, and one Catechisme, till there be first one forme of Ecclesiasticall government? yea, what hope can the kingdome and Kirk of *Scotland* have of a firme and durable peace, till prelacy, which hath beene the maine cause of their miseries and troubles first and last, be plucked up roote and branch, as a plant which God hath

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not planted, and from which no better fruits can be expected then such sowre Grapes as this day set on edge the kingdom of *England*?

5. The Prelaticall Hierarchy being put out of the way, the worke will be easie, without forcing of any conscience, to settle in *England* the government of the reformed Kirks by Assemblies. For although the reformed Kirks doe hold without doubting their Kirk officers and Kirk government by Assemblies higher and lower in their strong and beautifull subordination, to be *Jure Divino*, and perpetuall, yet Prelacy as it differeth from the Office of a Pastor is almost universally acknowledged by the Prelates themselves and their adherents, to be but an humane Ordinance introduced by humane reason, and setled by humane Law and custome for supposed conveniences, which therefore by humane authority, without wronging any mans conscience, may be altered and abolished upon so great a necessity as is a hearty conjunction with all the reformed Kirks, a firme and well grounded peace betwixt the two kingdomes formerly divided in themselves, and betwixt themselves by this partition wall; and a perfect union of the Kirks in the two Nations, which although by the providence of God in one Iland and under one Monarch, yet ever since the reformation, and for the present also, are at greatr difference in the point of Kirk government, which in all places hath a powerfull influence upon all the parts of Religion, then any other reformed Kirks, although in Nations at greatest distance, and under divers Princes.

6. What may be required of the Kirke of *Scotland* for furthering the worke of uniformity of government, or for agreeing upon a common confession of Faith Catechisme, and directory for worship, shall according to the Order given by this Assembly be most willingly performed by us, who long extreamely for the day when King and Parliament shall joyne for bringing to passe so great, so good a worke. Then all warres and commotions ceasing, all Superstition, Idolatry, Heresies, Sects, and Schismes being removed, as the Lord is one, so his name may be one amongst us, and mercy and truth, righteousnesse and peace meeting together and kissing one another, may dwell in this Iland.

Extracted forth of this Booke of the Generall Assembly by me Sir Archibald Johnston *of Warneston Knight, Clerk thereto, Witnessing my signe and subscription manuall.*

A. Johnston. *Cler. Eccl.*

This Declaration was presented to the Parliament by the Lords Commissioners on the 25. of *August*. 1642.

A Letter sent by some Brethren of the Ministers of the Church of *England* to the Generall Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*.

Right Reverend in our Lord and Saviour,

WE received with much joy and satisfaction, the answer of your Generall Assembly, vouchsafed us to our Letters of the last yeere; Some of us in name of our brethren, thought it then fit by Mr. *Alexander Henderson* (a Brother so justly approved by you, and honoured by us,) to returne our desired thanks: And we now further thinke it equall upon this occasion, to make a more publique acknowledge-

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ment of such a publique favour: You were then pleased to give us faire grounds to expect that brotherly advice and endeavours, which the common cause of Christ, and the mutuall interrest of the united Nations commands us now againe to aske, if not to challenge. We doubt not but your experience, together with your intelligence, abundantly informs you of our condition, what various administrations of providence we have passed thorough, and we still lie betwixt hopes and feares, a fit temper for working, the God of all grace enable us to improve it. As our hopes are not such as may make us secure, so neither doe our feares prevaile to the casting away of our confidence. Your own late condition, together with this Declaration of our present, may acquaint you with the certaine, though subtile authours and fomenters of these our confused conflicts, which we conceive to be the Hierarchicall faction, who have no way to peace and safety, but through the trouble of others. Our prayers and endeavours according to our measure have been, and shal be for the supplanting and rooting up whatsoever we finde so prejudiciall to the establishment of the Kingdome of Christ, and the peace of our Soveraigne. And that this Declaration of our selves may not leave you unsatisfied, we thinke it requisite further to expresse, that the desire of the most godly and considerable part amongst us, is, that the Presbyterian Government, which hath just and evident foundation, both in the Word of God, and religious reason, may be established amongst us, and that (according to your intimation) we may agree in one confession of Faith, one directory for worship, one publike Catechisme and forme of Government, which things, if they were accomplished, we should much rejoyce in our happy subjection to Christ our head, and desired association with you our beloved Brethren: For the better effecting whereof, we thought it necessary, not onely to acquaint you with what our desires are in themselves, but also to You, that is, that what shall seeme most fit to the wisdome of that grave and religious Assembly, may be taken for the furtherance of our endevours in this kind. We understand that our Parliament hath been before-hand with us in this intimation, and it cannot be but our duty, who are so much concerned in the businesse, to adde what power the Lord hath given, with you, to the same purpose. This designe and desire of ours hath evennesse on the left hand, and dissenting Brethren on the right, but we doubt not that as our hearts justifie us that our intentions are right, and such as we conceive tend most directly to the glory of God, and peace of the Churches of the Saints: So (by your brotherly concurrence in the most speedy and effectuall way you can finde out) the worke will in Gods due time receive a prayed for, and hoped for issue. We shall not need by any arguments from mutuall, Nationall interest (though we know ye will not over-looke these) to enforce this request, the same bond wherewith we are all united in one Lord Jesus Christ, we are assured, will alone ingage your faithfull endeavours in this businesse. To him we commit you, with these great and important affaires you have in hand. Be pleased to accept of these, as the expression of the minds of our many godly and faithful brethren, whose hearts we doubt not of, neither need you, though their hands in regard of the suddennesse of this opportunity, could not be subscribed, together with ours, who are

Your most affectionate Friends, and Brethren in the worke of the Lord.

London, July 22. 1642.

Sic Subscribitur.

The answer of the generall Assembly of the Kirk of *Scotland* to the Letter sent by the Ministers of *England*.

Right Reverend and beloved in the Lord Jesus,

BY our Answer to the Declaration sent unto us from the honourable Houses of Parliament, you may perceive that your Letter, which came into our hands so seasonably, was not onely acceptable unto us, but hath also encouraged us to renew, both to the Kings Majesty and the Houses of Parliament, the desires of the late Commissioners of this Kingdom for unity in Religion in the foure particulars remembred by you. We cannot be ignorant but the opposition from Sathan, and worldly men in Kirke and prelacy, will still be vehement, as it hath been already. But we are confident through our Lord Jesus Christ, that the prayers and endeavours of the godly in both Kingdomes, will bring the worke to a wished, a blessed issue. This whole Nationall Kirke is so much concerned in that reformation and unity of Religion in both Kingdomes, that without it we cannot hope for any long time to enjoy our purity and peace, which hath cost us so deere, and is now our chiefest comfort and greatest treasure; which one cause, (beside the honour of God, and the happinesse of the people of God in that Kingdome) more desired of us than our lives) is more then sufficient to move us to contribute all that is in our power for bringing it to passe: And since we have with so great liberty made our desires and hopes known both to King and Parliament, it is a duty incumbent both to you and us, who make mention of the Lord, and are Watchmen upon the wals of *Ierusalem*, nevermore to keep silence, nor to hold your peace day nor night, till the righteousnesse of *Zion* goe forth as brightnesse, and the salvation thereof as a Lamp that burneth: And if it shall please the Lord to move the hearts of King and Parliament to hearken unto the motion (for which end we have resolved to keepe a solemne Fast and humiliation in all the Kirks of this Kingdome, the mean by which we have prevailed in times past) we wish that the worke may be begun with speed, and prosecuted with diligence by the joynt labours of Divines in both Kingdoms who may prepare the same for the view and examination of a more frequent Ecclesiasticke meeting of the best affected to Reformation there, and of the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly here that in the end, it may have the approbation of the Generall Assembly here, and of all the Kirks there, in the best way that may be, we wish and hope at last in a Nationall Assembly. Our Commissioners at *Edenburgh* shall in our name receive and returne answers for promoving so great a worke, which we with our heart and soule recommend to the blessing of God, and continue.

Your loving Brethren and Fellow-labourers, The Commissioners of the Generall Assembly, subscribing by our Moderator and Clerk.

Saint Andrews, Aug. 5. 1642.

Vera Copia, *Robert Dowglasse, Moderator. A. Iohnston, Cler. Eccl.*

This Letter was delivered by the Lord *Maitland* on the 26 of August. 1642.

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